

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LUSAKA 00219 251824Z
ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7461

INFO AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY GABORONE IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LAGOS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA IMMEDIATE

USMISSIO USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL CAPETOWN IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L LUSAKA 0219

EXDIS

CAPETOWN FOR EMBASSY

USUN FOR AMB YOUNG

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PDEV RH US UK

SUBJ: RHODESIA: CONVERSATION WITH NKOMO

1. POLITICAL OFFICER AND I SPOKE BRIEFLY WITH NKOMO AT HIS HOUSE WEDNESDAY EVENING. WE FIRST MENTIONED HIS PRESS CONFERENCE IN THE MORNING AND ASKED WHAT HE EXPECTED FROM OWEN BEYOND AN ASSURANCE THAT THE UK AND US WERE SERIOUSLY PURSUING THEIR PROPOSAL. NKOMO REPLIED THAT THAT WAS EXACTLY WHAT HE WANTED TO HEAR. HE INDICATED HE WOULD ASK OWEN WHAT HIS POSITION WAS TOWARDS THE SALISBURY TALKS. HE ALSO EXPRESSED SOME CONCERN THAT THE PRESS MAY HAVE MISINTERPRETED WHAT HE SAID AT THE
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PRESS CONFERENCE BUT STOOD ON HIS WRITTEN STATEMENT.

2. I SAID THAT WE HOPED TO BE ABLE TO GET DOWN TO SERIOUS DISCUSSION OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PROPOSALS. HE READILY AGREED AND ADDED THAT THE PF HAD ITS OWN SPECIFIC PROPOSALS TO MAKE. IT WOULD NOT GIVE US ANYTHING WRITTEN BUT WOULD CERTAINLY OUTLINE ITS IDEAS ORALLY. NKOMO RECALLED THE LAST

TIME HE HAD MET WITH OWEN AND YOUNG IN NEW YORK WHEN HE HAD BEEN "LET DOWN". HE WANTED TO PROCEED VERY CAREFULLY THIS TIME. OWEN WAS AN IMPATIENT MAN AND NKOMO DID NOT KNOW HOW LONG THE BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY WAS PREPARED TO STAY IN MALTA. HE WOULD SEE HOW THINGS WENT. IF THERE WAS A PROSPECT FOR AGREEMENT, DISCUSSIONS COULD CONTINUE AT A LOWER LEVEL OR A FURTHER MEETING COULD BE HELD. THE IMPORTANT THING WAS, AS HE REPEATED A NUMBER OF TIMES, THAT THERE SHOULD BE NO MISUNDERSTANDINGS. HE DID NOT WANT TO BE RUSHED INTO ANYTHING THAT HE WAS NOT QUITE CLEAR ABOUT.

3. I SAID I THOUGHT MALTA MIGHT PRESENT ONE OF OUR LAST OPPORTUNITIES FOR A NEGOTIATED SOLUTION. NKOMO LAUGHED AND SAID HE HAD BEEN THROUGH TOO MANY OTHER "LAST OPPORTUNITIES" TO BE WORRIED ABOUT THAT, BUT HE INTENDED TO TAKE THE MEETING SERIOUSLY. IF A BASIS OF AGREEMENT EXISTED, THIS COULD BE DISCOVERED IN A DAY OR TWO. HE WAS PREPARED TO CONTINUE FOR AS LONG AS NECESSARY IN DISCUSSION OF THE DETAILS. NKOMO SAID HE HAD BEEN AT THIS A LONG TIME AND HAD NOTHING TO SHOW FOR IT BEYOND WHAT HE CARRIED IN HIS SUITCASE. HE WAS AS ANXIOUS AS WE TO FIND A SOLUTION.

4. AGAIN HE BROUGHT UP THE MATTER OF FUNDS FOR HIS SCHOOL. I SAID THAT I HAD MENTIONED IT TO DICK MOOSE IN LONDON AND HOPED FOR A REPLY SOON.

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5. EARLIER, THE NIGERIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER IN LUSAKA, EMMANUEL OBA, TOLD ME THAT OBASANJO INTENDED TO TALK TURKEY TO THE PF LEADERS. HE WOULD INSIST THAT NKOMO AND MUGABE AGREE

TO GET DOWN TO SERIOUS DISCUSSIONS OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL. IF THEY REFUSED, HE SAID, NO ONE IN AFRICA WOULD SUPPORT THEM ANY LONGER. OBA EXPLAINED THAT AT THE LAST MINUTE IT HAD NOT BEEN POSSIBLE TO PROVIDE AN AIRPLANE TO CARRY THE PF DELEGATION TO LAGOS. INSTEAD, HE HAD ARRANGED FOR NKOMO AND THE GROUP TO GO COMMERCIALY TO NAIROBI AND THEN VIA NIGERIAN AIRLINES TO LAGOS. (THIS WAS WHY NKOMO HAD RESCHEDULED MY MEETING FOR THIS EVENING INSTEAD OF TOMORROW.) APPARENTLY MUGABE, WHO IS IN DAR, WILL TRAVEL TO ADDIS AND THEN ON TO LAGOS.

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